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NEWS RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced the sentencing of Taylor Renae Huey, age 20, of Poquoson, Virginia, in U.S. District Court today by the Honorable Jerome Friedman, United States District Court Judge. Huey was sentenced to 292 months in prison for her role in a string of armed robberies of fast food restaurants and video rental stores in four Hampton Roads cities between February 9 and April 7, 2002. Huey pled guilty in federal court on Aug. 9, 2002, to 17 of the 19 charges against her and admitted to participating in all 16 events (13 robberies and three attempted robberies), including five in Newport News, three in Hampton, two in York County and six in Virginia Beach.

In all of the robberies the assailants wore ski masks and forced the store clerks to surrender cash at either gunpoint, knife-point, or both. In at least two instances, store clerks were cut with the knife during the struggle. In one case, a clerk received stitches after she was cut on her face, and also suffered a broken hand.

Because the assailants were well-disguised, these robberies might have remained unsolved had it not been for an incident in which one of the assailants dropped his own watch during a struggle with one of the store clerks. DNA was isolated from the wristband of that watch and submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science DNA data bank for comparison. A hit from the DNA data bank led detectives to first one, then eventually the other two co-defendants.

Co-defendant, Matthew Lewis, who admitted to participating in nine of the 16 robberies, was sentenced on December 9, 2002, to 12 years in prison. The remaining co-defendant, James Wilson, Jr., will be sentenced on Jan. 15, 2003.

Mr. McNulty stated: "Armed robbery terrorizes its victims and those who commit such violent crimes deserve tough punishment. These defendants were, themselves, a crime wave in Hampton Roads. The communities' sense of justice has been well served by this sentence."

A multi-jurisdictional co-operative effort among local law enforcement from seven Hampton Roads cities and the FBI was instrumental in solving this string of robberies. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney, Sherrie S. Capotosto of the Newport News U.S. Attorney's Office.